Special Committee To Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade

INTERIM REPORT

June 28, 2000

1st Session of the 24th Legislature

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade

SASKATCHEWAN

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June 28, 2000

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To the Honourable Members
of the Legislative Assembly
of the Province of Saskatchewan

HONOURABLE MEMBERS:

Your *Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade* is pleased to present its Interim Report to the Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan.

We are deeply grateful for the input received from Saskatchewan people and are especially appreciative of the powerful presentations made by many courageous youth. Your Committee held public hearings in Saskatoon and Regina as well as a video conference with officials from Manitoba and Alberta. In total we have heard from 35 witnesses. This report embodies many of the ideas and suggestions presented to the Committee.

The purpose of this report is to further define the scope of the problem in our province and share legislative alternatives discussed to date. This report is also intended to promote awareness as well as examine the many suggestions put forward as prospective solutions.

Your Committee is not making any recommendations in this report. We expect to hold further hearings this fall to allow community groups, individuals and youth to voice their concerns, suggestions and recommendations. A final report, including recommendations, will follow our next phase of hearings and be presented at the next sitting of the Legislature.

It is an honour and a pleasure for us to work together in the spirit of parliamentarians on behalf of the Legislature of Saskatchewan. We respectfully submit the Interim Report of the *Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade*.

Arlene Julé
Co-Chair
MLA Humboldt

Peter Prebble
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The *Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade* expresses its sincere thanks for the assistance it has received to date from many sources.

The Committee extends its appreciation to its staff, from its Clerk and Technical Advisor to the Hansard and Broadcast staff who accompanied the Committee during their hearings, and to the staff of the Office of the Clerk who assisted in the arrangements of the public meetings. Finally the Committee's thanks are extended to the other members of the legislative service who supported the work of the Committee in their areas of expertise.

The Committee especially extends its appreciation to all the individuals and groups who made oral presentations during the first phase of the Committee's work. The Committee would like to send a special word of acknowledgement to all the youth who provided valuable oral presentations to the Members. Their courage and insight is greatly honoured and appreciated.

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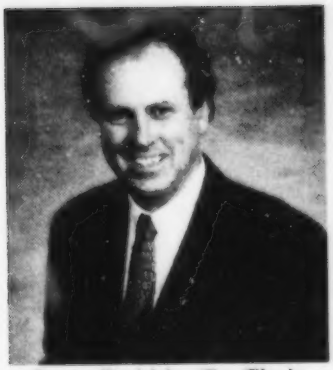
Composition of Committee



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Don Toth
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Kevin Yates
Regina Dewdney

Order of Reference

On December 13, 1999, the Legislative Assembly considered the creation of a Special Committee to inquire into the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade. On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Harry Van Mulligen, seconded by Ms. Arlene Julé, by leave of the Assembly, the following terms of reference were agreed upon:

> *That the members Julé, Prebble, Harper, Jones, Yates, Toth, and Draude be constituted a Special Committee to address and to make recommendations on the issue of the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade, and to consider and report on:*
>
> *(a) consultations with stakeholders that have an interest in this issue to determine the work that has been done to date by community representatives and service providers and seek their input on next steps to be taken by community and government;*
> *(b) the strategies employed by other jurisdictions and the effectiveness of their approaches;*
> *(c) reasons why children end up on the street in the first place and supports that may be necessary to help communities effectively deal with the sexual exploitation of children;*
> *(d) such other consultations that may be germane.*
>
> *And that the Committee have the power to sit during the intersessional period and during the legislative session, except when the Assembly is sitting; and that the committee have the power to send for persons, papers, and records; to examine witnesses under oath; to receive representations from interested parties and individuals; to engage such advisers and assistants as are required for the purposes of the inquiry; and to hold meetings away from the seat of Government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those desired to be heard.*
>
> *And that the Committee be instructed to submit its first report to the Legislative Assembly in the spring of the year 2000.*

The Assembly subsequently considered the organization of the Special Committee. On December 16, 1999, the Hon. Mr. Harry Van Mulligen, seconded by Ms. Arlene Julé, by leave of the Assembly, proposed the following resolution which was adopted:

> *Ordered, That this Assembly authorizes the Special Committee appointed on December 13, 1999 to address and make recommendations on the issue of the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade and other matters, to elect two Co-chairs, rather than a Chair and Vice-Chair, to preside over the Committee's proceedings.*

Organization

The Committee held its first meeting on December 17, 1999 and proceeded to elect Ms. Julé and Mr. Prebble as Co-Chairs. On February 9, 2000, the Committee considered its staffing requirements and the qualifications they were looking for in a research assistant. It was subsequently agreed on February 21, 2000, to second Randal Pritchard, Senior Program Consultant, Department of Social Services, as their Technical Advisor.

In approaching its mandate, the Committee agreed to begin its deliberations with a series of hearings at which they would hear from a cross section of stakeholders. Resource officials from the Departments of Health, Justice, and Social Services provided essential background knowledge on the programs and resources available in Saskatchewan. Subsequent hearings heard from witnesses in Regina and Saskatoon, and by video conference, individuals in Edmonton and Winnipeg. The witnesses came from a variety of backgrounds and interest groups including outreach programs, community-based organizations, municipal and police services officials, Aboriginal government organizations, individual citizens and youth. A total of 35 witnesses have appeared before the Committee during phase one. The locations and dates of the phase one hearings were as follows:

Department of Social Services	January 5, 2000	Legislative Building
Department of Justice	January 5, 2000	Legislative Building
Department of Health	February 9, 2000	Legislative Building
Video Conference	March 6, 2000	SaskTel Office
Regina Hearings	March 7 & 22, 2000	Legislative Building
Saskatoon Hearings	March 20 & 21, 2000	Centennial Auditorium

The Committee anticipates holding additional public hearings later this year. In preparation for this next phase of consultations, the Committee has corresponded with the mayors of the cities and larger towns in Saskatchewan inquiring whether there is an interest in scheduling a public hearing in their community. The Committee has also invited interested individuals and organizations to submit written briefs setting forth their views on any matters pertaining to the terms of reference. The Committee will examine the effectiveness of program and legislative approaches followed in other jurisdictions.

The purpose of this interim report is to define the problem and share the legislative issues discussed to date. This report is also intended to promote discussion and to begin to examine ideas put forward as prospective solutions.

I. Committee Principles

The Committee has developed a set of key principles to help guide members through their research, deliberations, and public hearings. The principles are as follows:

1. **Every child is everyone's responsibility**. The sexual abuse and exploitation of children is everyone's responsibility. It is not just an issue the government needs to address nor is it isolated to certain cultures or classes of society. To truly work towards the prevention of this abuse, every citizen of this province needs to take responsibility.

2. **The involvement of children in the sex trade is child abuse**. The Committee does not refer to this issue as child prostitution as it clearly is a form of child sexual abuse. The Committee recognizes and agrees with the voices of Canadian children and youth who spoke at the March 1998 International Summit on Sexually Exploited Youth held in Victoria, British Columbia. Youth who spoke at this summit strongly felt that the term "child prostitution" is not an appropriate reference to this type of sexual abuse.

> *"The first time I started working on the streets I was nine. Why did I do it? To support myself. I had no one to depend on. I was somebody ... I was an adult trapped in a nine-year-old's body. I had no respect for myself. I had no respect for anybody."*
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 179)

3. **Zero tolerance is our goal**. Our goal is to eliminate the involvement of children in the sex trade in Saskatchewan. It is the Committee's hope that public awareness will be increased through our provincial hearings, which will in turn have an effect on Saskatchewan's tolerance towards this type of abuse. The Committee promotes zero tolerance towards johns and pimps who perpetuate this abuse, as well as towards others who contribute to the sexual exploitation of children.

II. Witness Presentations

Phase one of the Committee's hearings was a very intense and emotionally draining experience for each Member, the staff of the Committee and for the participants. First-hand accounts from youth and adults who were sexually exploited on the streets as children were especially painful. The Committee is truly grateful for their courage in coming forward and for sharing their heart-wrenching experiences. Their detailed and graphic evidence, based upon their life stories, reflected the extreme seriousness of the sexual exploitation of children in our communities.

> *"She had been locked in a walk-in freezer in the back of a (Calgary) pizza shop. She had been on her back for 16 straight hours. She had sex with 42 men. ... this is not intended to shock you, ladies and gentlemen, this is intended to inform you of what is going on in this city and in Saskatoon and in every major city in Canada. This is our town after dark."*
>
> (Retired Staff Sergeant Ross MacInnes, Calgary Police Services, March 22, 2000, pg. 241)

The Committee heard that there are several root causes that lead up to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children:

- **Issues related to poverty**: low income, welfare dependency, poor housing, poor nutrition, etc.
- **Abuse issues**: emotional, physical, sexual.
- **Family dysfunction and violence.**
- **Lack of cultural identity**: residential school syndrome, loss of traditional parenting skills, racism etc.

> *"The stuff that went on in the house was unreal. You can't even call it abuse; it's called torture."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 187)

The issues as to why children end up on the street in the first place were also addressed. One reason all youth and outreach staff consistently raised was the extreme lack of self-esteem that these children suffer from. Ill-defined moral values, self-loathing, self-hatred, and high susceptibility to peer pressure, abuse, and exploitation were identified in the hearings as additional causes.

> *"Many sexually exploited youth are still suffering from oppression, and poverty, and self-esteem. All it takes is for one person to make a difference in one person's life."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 179)

> *"You grow up around that. You see, oh, look at the nice clothes they have ... . They have money all the time, they have joints. Oh wow, they're drinking all the time. Obviously you're going to want some part of that."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 191)

The Committee also heard various estimates on the extent of the problem in both Saskatoon and Regina. Saskatoon Police estimated as of January 2000 and in the previous sixteen months that there were a total of 61 youth under the age of 18, and eight under the age of 14, who were sexually exploited on the street. Documentation submitted from Egadz Outreach in Saskatoon indicated that the problem is much more significant. Egadz statistics for the 1999-2000 fiscal year indicate that there were 261 youth who were sexually exploited in Saskatoon. Broken down further, these included 58 female children 14 years and younger, 197 females aged 15-18 years old, and six males aged 15-18 years old.

Witnesses from Regina presented statistics to the Committee which indicate that at any given time there are about 300 children who are being sexually exploited and abused on the street, particularly in the core area of North Central Regina.

> *"We have at one time looked at all the prostitutes that we have charged in Regina and they are up around the number of 900. ... And I would guess, or take an estimated guess, that one-third of those are under 18."*
> (Detective Constable Sheree Gay, Regina Police Services, March 7, 2000, pg. 142)

Given these numbers, it became clear to the Committee that there is a much larger number of sexual predators seeking these children out.

At the conclusion of their first phase of hearings, the Committee identified a number of consistent themes throughout the testimony it received. The themes were grouped together under six areas of concern:

1. Legislative Approaches
2. Deterring Offenders
3. Long-term Healing
4. Prevention
5. Intervention, Outreach, and Safe Refuge
6. Education and Awareness.

These headings will in turn form the focus of the Committee's ongoing deliberations.

A. Legislative Approaches

1. Alberta Legislation

On February 1, 1999, Alberta's *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act,* S.A. 1998, c. P-19.3, (PChIP) came into effect. This Act allows for the involuntary apprehension and confinement of children and youth under the age of 18 who are involved in prostitution. Once a child is apprehended, professionals can detain him or her for up to 72 hours in a safe house for an emergency assessment. PChIP also allows for the use of restraining orders against pimps, and for fines of up to $10,000 for those who try and seduce former street youth back into "the life". The legislation further addresses the issue of enhanced services for victims through the PChIP follow-up program while increasing the financial penalties for offenders (i.e. "johns") up to $25,000.

The Committee heard from outreach staff and police representatives from Alberta as well as from the Member of the Legislative Assembly responsible for sponsoring their legislation, Heather Forsyth. All these presenters consistently lauded the legislation with the message that this Bill was never intended to criminalize or punish these children. In contrast, it was intended as a protective measure to keep children safe.

> *"The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, ... clearly spells out what can and cannot be done. It is also a protective piece of legislation and not criminal ..."*
> (Heather Forsyth, Member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, March 6, 2000, pg. 87)

A law enforcement official from Manitoba also supported the PChIP Act stating that it is beneficial any time you can remove a child from immediate risk. However, police in Regina informed the Committee they feel legislation of this type would only drive the activity underground. Saskatoon police were apprehensive about taking a formal stance on the legislation as their community partners do not support it. They did inform the Committee that a 72-hour assessment would not be long enough for most of these children, as they would likely require a detoxification period of at least seven days.

Community representatives, outreach staff and youth strongly voiced their opposition to the Alberta legislation. Many of the youth felt that locking them up against their will would just make them angrier, especially if they were not ready to leave the street. Community representatives were also concerned with the possibility this legislation may drive the activity underground. It was felt that locking children up only re-victimizes them. They felt a child must be willing to change and this cannot be forced upon him or her.

> *"The last thing I want is somebody that I despise dragging me somewhere, you know, and holding me against my will. ... if you're going to change you're going to do it ... And until you're ready to do it, nobody can force you to. And the more you force somebody, the more hate is created."*
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 187)

> *"When you look at the Alberta Bill, it would only make sense that by locking these children up, it will only be another form of victimization."*
> (Don Meikle, Outreach Coordinator, Egadz Youth Centre, March 21, 2000, pg. 223)

Outreach staff from Saskatoon and Regina were concerned about the involuntary detention of children. In particular, the issues of re-victimization and driving the children underground were raised. Outreach staff were also very concerned and apprehensive that this legislative approach would have a negative effect on their relationship with children and youth, specifically that children and youth would feel betrayed by those they once trusted. However, one outreach worker in Regina expressed her support for the 72-hour detention, stating that it keeps the children safe, alive, and away from drugs. One parent shared with the Committee her relief at the knowledge that her child was off the street and safe whenever her daughter was placed in a youth detention facility.

> *"I believe in it (PChIP) just because we see a lot of kids that want to get off the street but they can't because they're addicted."*
>
> (Christine Deiter, Program Manager, North Central Community Society, Safety Services, March 7, 2000, pg. 152)

Officials from Alberta informed the Committee that, when their Bill was being drafted, community groups and individuals voiced concerns regarding re-victimization and the underground movement of children. However, it was noted those same critics are now highly supportive of the legislation as they see it as protective intervention rather than a punitive approach to the problem. Alberta presenters informed the Committee that they have seen no evidence to date that PChIP has driven the issue underground. Alberta officials have also made observations that the legislation has played a significant role in reducing the number of new children becoming involved in street life.

> *"... every three days that they're in our secure house is three days that they're not overdosing on drugs and it's three days they're not getting beat up or killed by johns or pimps ... every three days we can keep them safe is three more days that they're alive."*
>
> (Detective JoAnn McCartney, Edmonton Police Services, March 6, 2000, pg. 74)

> *"... we were concerned that some of this would be driven underground but the police are on top of this and also know where the trick pads are."*
>
> (Heather Forsyth, Member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, March 6, 2000, pg. 89)

All the presenters to date have felt that safe house programming, be it voluntary and/or involuntary, is an important and imperative transition for children and youth who wish to exit the street.

2. Manitoba Legislation

In February 1999, Manitoba introduced amendments to their *Highway Traffic Act*, S.M. 1985-86, c.3 - Chap. H60 to help deter offenders from soliciting women and children involved in the sex trade. Police in Manitoba now have the authority to seize and impound offenders' vehicles if they are charged with an offence related to prostitution.

> *"... the primary focus of the legislation was let's make this something that's going to add a serious consequence for anybody who is strolling ... or cruising areas looking particularly for children ...".*
> (Sergeant Wayne Harrison, Winnipeg Police Service, March 6, 2000, pg. 105)

The Committee heard mixed responses regarding Manitoba's seizure of vehicle legislation. A former street person did not feel impounding an offender's vehicle was much of a deterrent, stating that most johns are middle class and likely have more than one car. Representatives of the Regina Police Service strongly supported Manitoba's legislative direction and recommended Saskatchewan follow suit. The Saskatoon Police Service representatives declined to offer an opinion, indicating that they wish to monitor the situation in Manitoba for a longer period.

> *"It (the legislation) also further deters street prostitution in general and reduces traffic in the effected areas, thereby making the community safer."*
> (Sergeant Wayne Harrison, Winnipeg Police Service, March 6, 2000, pg. 103)

The Committee was informed by Manitoba officials that a useful effect of their legislation has been the general reduction in street traffic and related stresses (i.e. litter, loitering, etc.) in low-income neighbourhoods where the strolls are located.

B. Deterring Offenders

Manitoba's "Seizure of Vehicles in Prostitution Related Offences" legislation is aimed directly at deterring johns. It includes a "john school" which is an alternative measures program for offenders who solicit the services of adults. Under the program, offenders who successfully complete the john school and pay a $400 tuition fee/fine may seek the return of their vehicle. The proceeds from the fine go towards programming to help women involved in the sex trade. Those offenders who prey on children and youth for sexual services are not eligible for the alternative measures program.

Most of the presenters to the Committee felt john schools were not an appropriate alternative measures program for offenders that are charged with abusing children. However, one outreach staff in Regina felt a john school for men who offend against children would be appropriate if its curriculum was focused on issues surrounding pedophilic behaviors.

> *"They (johns) get sent to school for their problems. You get sent to jail, like, what's up with that?"*
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 186)

> *"Children are very observant and take notice of the fact that someone who's caught having sex with the underage are not spending one day in jail. (Yet) We're continuing to lock ... up (these) kids because they are out of control."*
> (Don Meikle, Outreach Coordinator, Egadz Youth Centre, March 21, 2000, pg. 223)

> *"... anybody charged and convicted of this should automatically go to jail. People are a lot less willing to give up their freedom as opposed to a few dollars (for a fine)."*
> (Bill Thibodeau, Executive Director, Egadz Youth Centre, March 21, 2000, pg. 229)

Another consistent and strong message heard from all presenters was the need for increased and more severe penalties aimed at offenders. Some felt the revenue created from fines should go towards programming and safe houses for victims.

Representatives of police services voiced the frustration they feel when investigating those who wish to purchase the sexual services of children. Regina police would like to see legislation that would help them to stop a potential abuse situation when they see it happening.

> *"We see a 12-year-old girl on the corner of the street ... She is waving at cars ... and from our experience we know that she is out there selling herself ... a car will pick her up ... So we stop that vehicle ... when I pull that vehicle over and I approach the driver and I ask him for his driver's license and his registration and he complies, and I see no signs of impairment, and I ask him who the young girl is and he tells me that it's none of your business, basically as a police officer I have no grounds to arbitrarily detain him any longer. If he tells me that it is his niece ... doesn't tell me why she was on the corner or refuses to answer those questions for me, I have no alternative but to let him proceed. Because as the law states at this particular time, I don't have enough reasonable grounds to believe, based on the fact that child was standing on the corner, that that crime is going to be committed – as the law stands now. So I can't explain to you how heart-wrenching it is for me as a police officer to let that john drive away."*
> (Detective Constable Sheree Gay, Regina Police Services, March 7, 2000, pg. 137)

The Regina Police Services also had the following recommendations for the Committee:

- The province should lobby the federal Minister of Justice to amend the Criminal Code (Canada) to grant the provinces and municipalities the power to implement legislation regarding nuisance problems associated with prostitution (excessive traffic, littering, obstruction, etc.).
- The province should lobby the federal Minister of Justice to change Section 213 of the Criminal Code (offences related to prostitution) from a summary offence to a hybrid offence. This will allow offenders to be fingerprinted and photographed, thereby creating an easier system of tracking johns who move from city to city preying on children.
- The Regina Police Service does not support the concept of red-light districts. They feel this would just place the clean, medically approved individuals in a safer environment. This would not help the children or serious intravenous drug users involved in the activity.

C. Long-Term Healing

One consistent theme throughout all of the Committee's first phase of hearings was the message that Saskatchewan lacks an appropriate long-term addiction treatment center for children and youth. Most presenters stressed the need for a holistic long-term treatment center for children, youth, and their families. They proposed an optimum treatment center that would deal with all addiction areas, including substance abuse and addiction to the street, as well as with verbal, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and self-esteem issues. There was also a strong emphasis from presenters that this client group needs more programs that are culturally sensitive and have a traditional Aboriginal approach.

> *"There is a need for longer term, community-based holistic substance abuse initiatives. We need substance abuse initiatives ... that deal with the child and youth as well as their families where necessary."*
>
> (Jacqui Barclay, Saskatoon Outreach Worker, Saskatoon District Health, Street Outreach Program, March 20, 2000, pg. 183)

The Committee heard there is similarly a high need in Alberta for a long-term holistic treatment center specializing in this client group. Presenters from Alberta informed the Committee that their province has the same deficiency of appropriate long-term addiction treatment for children and youth. Many of the children apprehended under the PChIP legislation have severe drug addictions which require extensive treatment beyond the 72-hour emergency protection the Act provides.

One parent who spoke to the Committee stressed that preventative programming should include families and not just target children. She felt there was a need for group programming for parents of sexually exploited children so they can help, support, and learn from each other.

Another common theme that came up, especially from the youth and a former street person, was the lack of services for women in their 20's and older who want to, or already have, exited the street. Many of these women began working the street as children themselves and very few services are available to them once they turn 18 years of age. The Committee heard that long-term healing initiatives need to be developed and offered to these women to help them cope and keep their own families and children safe and healthy.

> *"... we know women who are in their 20s or 30s, they've been exploited when they were 12, 13, 14, 15 – we can't forget them either ... most of them don't have skills either and need to be taught those skills, you know, to function, to live, you know. Like, I don't want my children to live in poverty."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 199)

The importance of transitional housing beyond the safe house, particularly for teens, was also discussed. Training and opportunities to return to school, as well as increased employment opportunities for youth to earn money, were also mentioned by many witnesses as key to getting individuals off the street.

D. Prevention

All the presenters were unanimous in their suggestion that prevention is a priority in combatting this serious issue. The Committee heard that tougher legislation is not sufficient in itself to effectively address the problem. Extensive programming needs to be invested into the underlying root causes of the activity, such as poverty, family violence and multi-faceted dysfunction.

> *"... children need a supportive, caring environment and the opportunity to choose healthy lifestyles."*
>
> *"... the children, who are sexually exploited through prostitution, and their families require diligence and persistence on the part of staff when attempting to establish a positive relationship with the family ..."*
>
> (Delora Parisian, Program Coordinator, Action Committee for Children at Risk, March 7, 2000, pg. 121)

Programs such as "Wraparound" were presented to the Committee as examples of prevention. Wraparound is a preventative program which creates a child and family team that focuses on strengths and support through faith, family, and friends. The child and family are also provided ongoing support from the team's social worker to help them achieve their goals.

> *"What Wraparound does is people identify their needs and their issues and make plans to work through them."*
>
> (Constable Joceline Schriemer, Saskatoon Police Service, March 21, 2000, pg. 204)

The Committee also heard from Doris Mae Oulton of the Manitoba Children and Youth Secretariat, who gave an overview of some very successful preventative programs currently operating in Manitoba. The Committee will examine in more depth the Manitoba Baby First program and their Early Start project when it resumes its hearings in the fall. The Manitoba government sees these programs as key to reducing domestic abuse and promoting healthy child development.

> *"Our Baby First program screens all children who are born in Manitoba at the time of birth. And if in fact their families are seen to be at risk families – that is to say they are at risk of abusing or neglecting their children – we hook them into a system that's based out of the public health system that has public health nurses doing a screening, inviting them to become part of our project. If they are part of our project, they have a home care visitor who goes out and works with them for the first two, two and a half years of their lives."*
>
> (Doris Mae Oulton, Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Children and Youth Secretariat, March 6, 2000, pg. 98)

E. Intervention, Outreach, and Safe Refuge

It was apparent from the hearings that outreach programming is an effective and vitally important intervention process to help children and youth exit "the life". Witnesses testified that outreach staff invest in these children over the long term and never give up the support required to help children, youth, and their families to choose healthy lifestyles. The Committee was told there are several effective outreach programs currently operating within Saskatchewan.

> *"And I kept going back to the streets until basically somebody suggested ... that I should see this woman (outreach) ... and she knew how it was like because before I thought that nobody was really like me. I thought that I was like ... I thought I was so useless to this world."*
>
> (Youth, March 7, 2000, pg. 126)

Safe house programming was again identified as an important intervention process to help children and youth exit the street. A safe house, such as the one operated by the Saskatoon Tribal Council in Saskatoon, provides children at risk with a safe refuge from the street. It provides an opportunity for children who have suffered abuse on the street to restore eating and sleeping patterns, have medical needs addressed, and receive counseling and other forms of assistance. A safe house is regarded as an important avenue by which to establish a relationship with a child to begin the process of helping him or her leave the street life.

> *"We need to have more Aboriginal families involved in foster care ... A lot of Aboriginal families are interested in taking care of Aboriginal children ... And these are good people; they will provide good homes."*
>
> (Gloria Swindler, Program Coordinator, Saskatoon Tribal Council Safe House, March 20, 2000, pg. 175-176)

A few of the presenters felt the foster care system could also be an asset if more Aboriginal homes were recruited. It was their view that Aboriginal children in care of the province would be less likely to run from the system if they were in a home where they felt comfortable. The current foster care system was viewed as not an adequate resource for this client group.

F. Education and Awareness

> *"... educate our children from a very small age. Because if you educate them in the right way ... knowledge is power."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 187)

The Committee heard testimony from the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services and community groups regarding awareness work that has been done to date including poster campaigns, educational pamphlets, and a sign campaign in the stroll areas of Saskatoon. Another consistent message the Committee heard was that education and awareness is a necessary and important approach to take in the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children through the sex trade. Many presenters felt children who are potentially at risk and their families need to be educated about the dangers associated with street culture. It was recommended that the issue be included in their school curriculum to give them knowledge of street dangers and the importance of making healthy choices.

> *"It needs to be on TV, it needs to be in magazines, you know, in Chanel and all those places. People need to know that this is happening, and yes you have to recognize it, and yes it has to stop."*
>
> (Youth, March 20, 2000, pg. 198)

Community awareness is also vital to help curb the problem and effectively addresses the issue. The Committee was informed that the general public and community groups need to be made aware of current federal and provincial legislation which address the sexual exploitation of children. It was felt that the scope of the problem, including the demographics of children and offenders, needs to be communicated extensively and regularly to the general public.

The Committee heard that community education and awareness is most effective when coordinated through partnerships of stakeholders. Participants advised that service delivery, education, and awareness need to be comprehensive, integrated, and co-operative between stakeholders as diverse as government departments, police services, social agencies, First Nations and Metis groups, neighborhoods, educators and the general public.

> ***"It is imperative that agencies and organizations work in co-operation. A multi-faceted strategy is needed to combat the multidimensional issue of child sexual abuse."***
>
> (Sandi LeBoeuf, Co-Chair and Executive Director, Saskatoon Tribal Council Family Centre, March 20, 2000, pg. 154)

III. Phase Two

A. Aboriginal Input

The Committee strongly feels it is vitally important to have the involvement of the Aboriginal community during our public hearings. To date the Committee has been honoured to have present at each of their hearings an Aboriginal Elder to provide an opening prayer and to bless the hearings and youth who participated.

Due to the fact that a high percentage of sexually exploited children are of First Nations and Metis ancestry, the Committee believes it is important to consult with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), Tribal Councils, Metis Locals, First Nations and Metis service providers and organizations that have a vested concern for these children. The Committee also sent letters to both the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan seeking suggestions on who they feel the Committee should hear from.

The Committee appreciates the input from the Provincial Metis Family & Community Justice Services and the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The Committee is looking forward to further input from the Aboriginal sector on a wide range of issues including legislative approaches. Their views regarding Alberta's PChIP model and suggestions on how to alter it or create alternative legislation would be extremely beneficial to the Committee's deliberations.

B. Next Steps

The presenting of this Interim Report represents the conclusion of the first phase of the Committee's mandate. The Committee anticipates that its next phase of consultations will take place later this year. At that time, the Committee will embark on an extensive province-wide public hearing process focusing on the urban centers of Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. These sessions will be open to the public to allow community groups, individuals, and youth to voice their concerns, suggestions, and recommendations.

The Committee is unanimous in its belief that the root causes of poverty, family violence and racism must be addressed. Investigating why children end up on the street is a further priority.

During phase two, the Committee intends to consider such initiatives as neighbourhood-based employment opportunities, Hawaii's child abuse prevention program, and Manitoba's Early Start Program.

At the conclusion of their fall consultations, the Committee will prepare a more extensive and detailed final report with recommendations for presentation to the Legislative Assembly during its next sitting. The final report will include a description of work that has been done by community representatives and service providers. Descriptive analyses of services that are available in each community and of existing support provided at the provincial level will also be examined.

List of Witnesses

Detective JoAnn McCartney Vice Unit Edmonton Police Services	March 6, 2000
Kourch Chan Program Manager Crossroads Outreach & Safe Houses	March 6, 2000
Diana Wark Street Outreach Worker & Community Follow-up Worker Crossroads Outreach & Safe Houses	March 6, 2000
Heather Forsyth Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta Calgary Fish Creek	March 6, 2000
Doris Mae Oulton Chief Executive Officer Manitoba Children & Youth Secretariat	March 6, 2000
Detective Sergeant Wayne Harrison Vice Division Winnipeg Police Services	March 6, 2000
Terry Mountjoy Manager, Social Development Unit City of Regina	March 7, 2000
Delora Parisian Program Coordinator Action Committee for Children at Risk (ACCAR)	March 7, 2000
Valeri Racette Support Services Provider Action Committee for Children at Risk (ACCAR)	March 7, 2000
Cadace (Youth)	March 7, 2000
Ms. Dale Grey	March 7, 2000
Detective Staff Sergeant Rick Coffey Regina Police Services	March 7, 2000
Detective Constable Sheree Gay Regina Police Services	March 7, 2000
Christine Deiter Program Manager North Central Community Society, Safety Services	March 7, 2000
Camillia Fraser Board Member North Central Community Society, Safety Services	March 7, 2000
Janice Muir Board Member North Central Community Society, Safety Services	March 7, 2000

Marie Rockthunder-Smith Intervention Worker North Central Community Society, Safety Services	March 7, 2000
Karen Desjarlais Intervention Worker North Central Community Society, Safety Services	March 7, 2000
Sandi LeBoeuf Co-chair & Executive Director, Saskatoon Tribal Council Family Centre Communities for Children, Working Group to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children by Perpetrators and Pimps	March 20, 2000
Gloria Swindler Program Coordinator Saskatoon Tribal Council Safe House	March 20, 2000
Michael Quenell Evaluation Consultant Saskatoon Tribal Council Safe House	March 20, 2000
Jacqui Barclay Outreach Worker Saskatoon District Health, Street Outreach Program	March 20, 2000
Sarah (Youth)	March 20, 2000
Chasity (Youth)	March 20, 2000
Margarite (Youth)	March 20, 2000
Constable Joceline Schriemer Saskatoon Police Service	March 21, 2000
Superintendent Bill Hargarten Saskatoon Police Service	March 21, 2000
Sergeant Len Watkins Saskatoon Police Service	March 21, 2000
Ingrid MacColl Director of Family Services Metis Family & Community Justice Services	March 21, 2000
Wayne Ross Director of Justice Services Metis Family & Community Justice Services	March 21, 2000
Bill Thibodeau Executive Director Egadz Youth Centre	March 21, 2000
Don Meikle Outreach Coordinator Egadz Youth Centre	March 21, 2000
Bev (Parent)	March 21, 2000
Joy (Youth)	March 21, 2000
Ross MacInnes Author	March 22, 2000

Tabled Documents

AEC 1/24 **Committee Document**: Draft Agenda.

AEC 2/24 **Department of Social Services**: Powerpoint presentation materials for the committee meeting of January 5, 2000, entitled "Amendments to *The Child and Family Services Act*".

AEC 3/24 **Department of Justice**: Policy and Practise Directive – Subject: Child Prostitution.

AEC 4/24 **Department of Justice**: Saskatchewan Police Commission – Provincial Police Policy: Cases Where Children are Involved in Prostitution, dated June 25, 1999.

AEC 5/24 **Department of Social Services**: Social Services Child Protection Response to the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Through Prostitution, dated August 31, 1999.

AEC 6/24 **Department of Justice**: Chronology.

AEC 7/24 **Department of Social Services**: Legislative Review – Summary of Discussions with Select Stakeholders.

AEC 8/24 **Saskatchewan Health Alcohol and Drug Services**: Presentation materials to the *Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade*.

AEC 9/24 **Department of Health**: Directory of Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services in Saskatchewan Health Districts.

AEC 10/24 **City of Regina**: Presentation materials for the March 7, 2000 meeting, including:

- "Doing Something About It: A Strategy to Reduce Child Street Prostitution in Regina";
- City of Regina Crime Prevention Commission – Sexual Abuse of Children Through Prostitution Committee: Five Part Strategy (Update December 1999);
- City of Regina Crime Prevention Commission – pamphlet entitled "Doing Something About It – A Strategy to Prevent Sexual Abuse of Children through Prostitution";
- Posters.

AEC 11/24 **Saskatoon Communities for Children**: Presentation materials by the Working Group to Stop the Sexual Abuse of Children by Perpetrators and Pimps for the March 20, 2000 meeting;

- "Changes to Legislation Sub-Group" – report by the Working Group to Stop the Sexual Abuse of Children by Perpetrators and Pimps;
- "Facilitator's Manual" – pamphlet prepared by the Saskatoon Communities for Children;
- "Joint Planning Mechanism" – pamphlet prepared by the Saskatoon Communities for Children;
- Poster entitled "Let's Give Priority to Stopping Sexual Abuse of Children on Our Streets";
- Series of three posters prepared by the Departments of Justice and Social Services.

AEC 12/24 **University of Saskatchewan**: Videotape entitled "It's not Prostitution, It's Child Sexual Abuse!" prepared in conjunction with the Division of Audio Visual Services.

AEC 13/24 **Saskatoon Tribal Council**: 1999 Safehouse Statistics.

AEC 14/24 **Saskatoon City Centre Partnership For Children and Youth**:

- Information Sheet;
- Media Release, entitled "Saskatoon Partnership launches City Centre Initiative", dated February 7, 2000;
- Media Backgrounder.

AEC 15/24 **Saskatoon District Health**: Street Outreach Program – Public Health Services, dated March 20, 2000.

AEC 16/24 **Saskatoon District Health**: Information pamphlets.

AEC 17/24 **Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade**: Budget Estimate for Phase I.

AEC 18/24 **Saskatoon Police Service**: Presentation materials for the March 21, 2000 meeting, including:

- Article entitled "Research Regarding the Relationship between Education and Prostitution";
- Case summary "Lori";
- Article entitled "Absentee Assessment Team: Demonstration Project Proposal", dated August 17, 1999;
- Article entitled "Absentee Assessment Team Project";
- "Wraparound Process – Absentee Assessment Team" pamphlets.

AEC 19/24 **Egadz Youth Centre**: Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc. (Egadz) – 1998 Annual Report.

AEC 20/24 **Ross MacInnes**: Presentation materials for the March 7, 2000 meeting.

AEC 21/24 **Arlene Julé:** Report to the Legislative Committee on the "From Answers to Action" – A Global Conference on Healing Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution, May 4-6, 2000, Edmonton, Alberta.

AEC 22/24 **Randal Pritchard:** Technical Advisor's Report to the Special Committee on the "From Answers to Action" – A Global Conference on Healing Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution, May 4-6, 2000, Edmonton, Alberta.